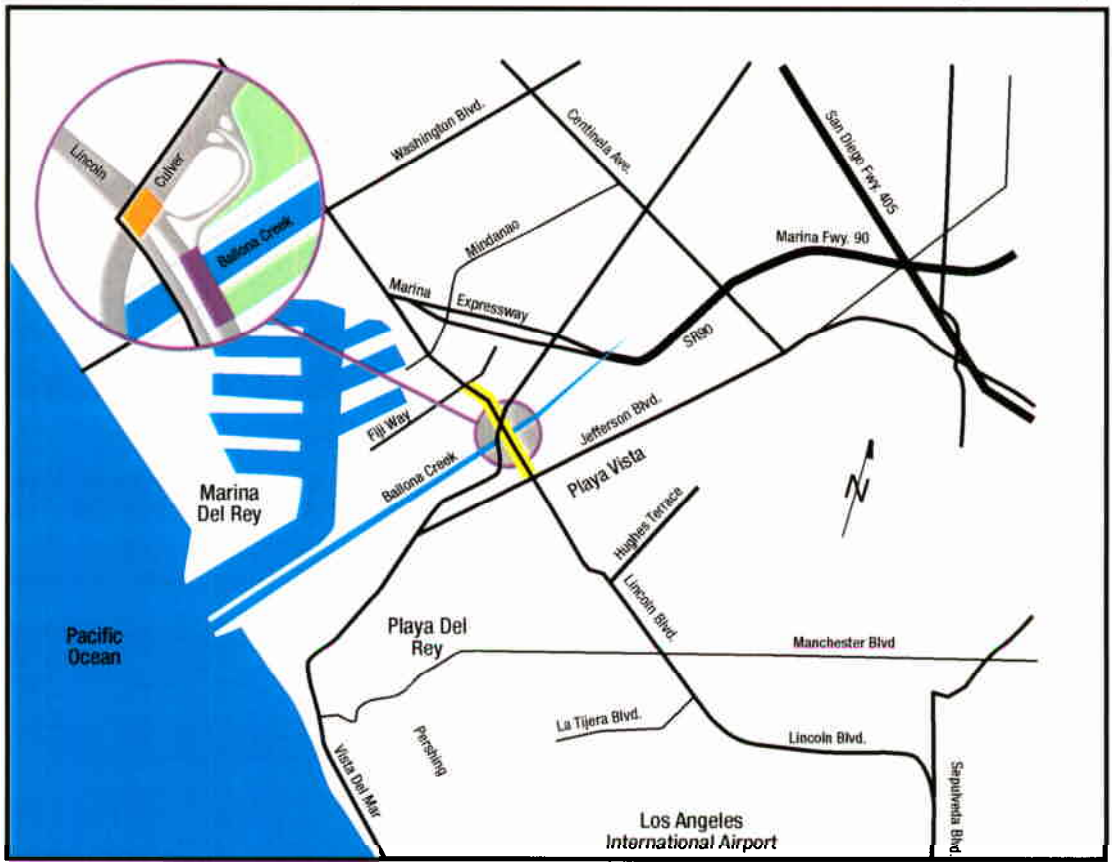
Route 1 (Lincoln Boulevard)

Widening from Jefferson Blvd. to Fiji Way, Construction of a New Bridge over Ballona Creek, and Replacement of the Culver Blvd. Overcrossing

Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA)



California Department of Transportation
Los Angeles, District 7
Office of Environmental Planning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

2-DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This section describes the alternatives considered for this project: No-build (Alternative 1), the Proposed Project (Alternative 2), and various other Alternatives that were all considered but rejected in lieu of the Proposed Project, since they would not fulfill the project objectives, and/or would fail to fulfill the project objectives at lesser costs and/or lesser environmental impacts.

Based on the descriptions of the relevant resources in Section 3 (Affected Environment) and the predicted effects of the alternatives in Section 4 (Environmental Evaluation), this section presents the effects of all alternatives in comparative form, providing a clear basis for choice among the options presented.

2.2 Alternatives Considered

2.2.1 Alternative 1 - The "No Build" Alternative

The "No Build" or "Do Nothing" alternative would result in the cross-section of Route-1 remaining as is (three through lanes in each direction). The No-Build alternative would do nothing to improve the present day or projected congestion and congestion related problems, thereby leading to a progressive deterioration in the Level of Service (LOS) provided. The purpose and need of the project would remain unaddressed, and thus the objectives of the project unrealized (i.e. congestion relief and safety improvement). This approach is inconsistent with Caltrans's goal of minimizing congestion and maintaining an efficient and effective interregional mobility system. Caltrans's mission is to "Improve Mobility Across California".

2.2.2 Alternative 2 - Proposed Project

The proposed project consists of widening both the east and west sides of Lincoln Boulevard to provide four through lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions (except lane drops areas), plus a fifth lane in each direction in the vicinity of the Culver Boulevard ramp connectors, tapering to match the existing cross section at Fiji Way. The fifth lanes would serve as departure lanes as well as acceleration merge lanes from a reconstructed Culver Boulevard ramp connector to/from northbound Lincoln Boulevard (the latter is not a part of this project, but will be constructed by the City of Los Angeles).

The proposed project also includes the construction of a new bridge over Ballona Creek, located immediately east of and parallel to the existing Lincoln Boulevard Bridge over Ballona Creek. The existing bridge will carry four southbound travel lanes on Lincoln Boulevard. In conjunction with the Route 1 widening from Fiji Way to Jefferson Boulevard, five northbound travel lanes will be carried by the new bridge (four through lanes and a right-turn only lane to the Culver Boulevard loop ramp). The northern portion of the bridge will widen gradually, or flare, to accommodate the curve connector ramp to Culver Boulevard, which is yet to be constructed.

Lastly, the proposed project also includes the replacement of the existing Culver Boulevard Overcrossing over Route-1, with a new structure with a higher top elevation. Currently two designs are being considered. The first design considers replacing the existing structure with an new overcrossing that will carry traffic in both directions on Culver Boulevard, one lane in each direction. This will only be an interim overcrossing. The other design that is also being contemplated for the replacement of the existing Culver Boulevard Overcrossing considers the construction of an ultimate 6-lane replacement overcrossing, with an interim 2-lane decking on top to carry Culver Boulevard traffic while the new alignments necessary for the connections of the ultimate 6-lane overcrossing to Lincoln Boulevard, undergo design and construction. This design will reduce throw away costs.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, Park and Ride facilities, bike lanes, railroad involvement, Navigable Waterway involvement, and standard highway planting of trees are not included as part of the proposed However, standard highway planting and irrigation systems are planned for the embankment areas on both sides of Route-1.The City of Los Angeles will donate the right of way required for this project as a highway easement. This alternative, if approved, is anticipated to begin construction in Mid-2003.

2.2.3 North/South Corridor Alternatives Considered but Rejected

Given that Route 1 is the only continuous north/south route connecting Venice, Marina del Rey, the Playa Vista development, and the Westchester areas between the Pacific Ocean and Centinela Avenue, few alternatives are possible. The alternatives that were evaluated sought to develop additional north/south capacity on existing corridors, and/or sought to develop additional north/south corridors in the study area. However, it was concluded that each of the alternatives evaluated in this section would impose greater right-of-way and cost impacts, while providing a lesser increase in capacity than the proposed project, and thus were all rejected.

Improvements to Existing North/South Corridor Alternatives Considered, but Rejected

- Widening of Pacific Avenue
  This alternative involves the widening of Pacific Avenue from Washington Boulevard to Vista del Mar. This option would require additional right of way on both sides of Pacific Avenue and a new high-level bridge over the entrance to Marina del Rey. This would result in significant residential impact and cost. The traffic on Route 1 could use this improved Pacific Avenue, thus reducing some traffic congestion in the project area. However, this alternative is not cost effective to reduce projected future congestion level and congestion related accidents in the project area (Route-1 between Jefferson Boulevard and Fiji Way), hence it is rejected as an alternative to the proposed project. This alternative should be investigated in detail as a separate project to increase traffic mobility along Pacific Avenue.

- Widening of Centinela Avenue
  The widening of Centinela Avenue (a north/south arterial street) from north Jefferson Boulevard to Venice Boulevard will require additional right of way and will have significant residential and commercial impacts and costs. The widening of Centinela Avenue will not

serve the objectives of the proposed project (relieving existing and future congestion, as well as improving the safety on Route-1) and therefore this corridor would not serve as a viable alternative to the widening of Route 1, hence it is rejected.

- Widening of Inglewood Boulevard
  The widening of Inglewood Boulevard (a north/south city street running parallel to Centinela Avenue in the northern/eastern portion of study area) from north of Jefferson Boulevard to National Boulevard, encounters similar problems to the rejected widening of Centinela Avenue alternative stated above. The improvement of this city street will require additional right of way and will have significant residential impacts. Furthermore, the widening of Inglewood Boulevard will not serve the objectives of the proposed project (relieving existing and future congestion, as well as improving the safety on Route-1), and hence it is rejected.

- Widening of I-405 (San Diego Freeway)
  The widening of the I-405 freeway is restricted by right of way constraints. However, this freeway corridor is under study to add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes from Route-90 to the I-10, but the widening of I-405 to include any additional lanes other than the proposed HOV lanes is precluded by costly right of way, and hence will not be cost effective in reducing the projected future congestion level and congestion related accidents in the project area (Route-1 from Jefferson Boulevard to Fiji Way). Nonetheless, this alternative should be investigated in detail as a separate project to increase traffic mobility along the I-405 freeway.

North/South Corridor Alternatives Considered but Rejected

New north/south corridors are extremely difficult to develop in this urbanized area. Existing large developments (Los Angeles International Airport, Santa Monica Airport, Marina del Rey), existing infrastructure (Ballona Creek, State Route 90 freeway, I-405 freeway), and topography (Fox Hills, Playa del Rey bluffs) complicate the study area. All of these features make new route development difficult and expensive. Two route extensions were investigated with the intent of developing bypass routes parallel to Route 1.

- Falmouth Avenue Extension to Culver Boulevard
  Falmouth Avenue is a city street connecting Cabora Drive to Westchester Parkway running parallel to Route 1 on the west side. The extension of this city street to Culver Boulevard would have impacts on residential areas and sensitive wetlands. Furthermore the extension of Falmouth Avenue to Culver Boulevard will not serve the objectives of the proposed project (relieving existing and future congestion, as well as improving the safety on Route-1). Therefore this alternative is not a viable alternative to the widening of Route-1, hence it is rejected.

- Admiralty Way Extension to Teale Street
  The extension of Admiralty Way southerly to link with the intersection of Route-1 and Teale Street was studied as a means to reducing traffic along Route 1 from Fiji Way to Teale Street. This alternative would cross the environmentally sensitive Ballona Wetlands south of Jefferson Boulevard, hence, this alternative was rejected.

2.2.4 Conclusion – A Clear Basis for Choice

The objectives of the proposed project are to reduce existing and projected future congestion levels, as well as to reduce congestion-related accidents in the project area by enhancing capacity and mobility along the Route 1 corridor. When measured against the proposed objectives, each of the alternatives discussed either fall short, fail to meet design criteria, or have greater right of way requirements, costs, or environmental impacts. Therefore, the alternatives discussed have been rejected, and the proposed project (Alternative 2) is considered the preferred project alternative.

2.3 Other Projects

2.3.1 Related Caltrans Projects

In addition to the proposed project, there are several other Caltrans projects planned and/or approved near the project area. These projects are also in various stages of review or implementation, and are intended to relieve traffic congestion along the Route 1 corridor. Some of these projects are illustrated in Figure 3. Several of these projects have already been designed and approved, and are planned to begin construction in late 2001, and are expected to be completed in approximately 1 year. These projects include:

Route 1 Widening from Hughes Terrace to north of Jefferson Boulevard / Route 1 Restriping from north of Jefferson Boulevard to Fiji Way

This previously approved project includes the widening of Route 1 to provide four through lanes in each direction between Hughes Terrace and approximately 240 meters north of Jefferson Boulevard. This project includes some improvements, including re-striping, to Route 1 from Jefferson Boulevard to Fiji Way. The widening of Route 1 north of Jefferson Boulevard will be part of the Route 1 widening from Jefferson Boulevard to Fiji Way project, discussed later in this document.

Route 1/Mindanao Way Intersection Improvements

This previously approved project involves median removal and restriping to provide a fourth northbound through lane.

Route 1/Sepulveda Boulevard Intersection Improvements

This previously approved project involves median modification and restriping to provide four through lanes in both the northbound (west) and southbound (east) directions on Route 1 through the intersection.

The following project has been approved and is currently in the final stages of environmental review. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2002, and is expected to be completed in less than a year.

- Route 1 Widening, La Tijera Boulevard to Hughes Terrace

  This project involves the widening of Route 1 from La Tijera Blvd to Hughes Terrace. Specifically, this includes widening to add a fourth through lane in the northbound direction,

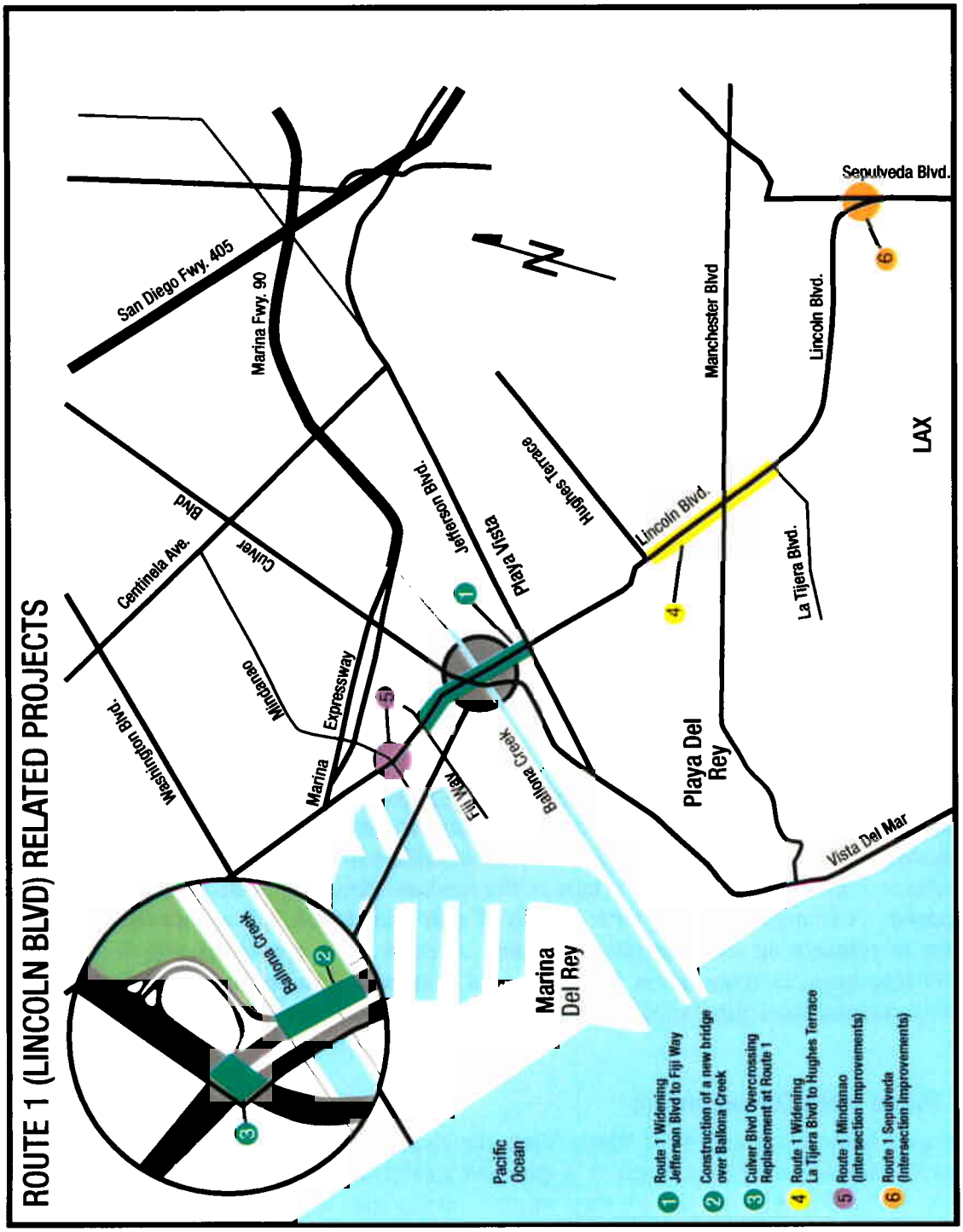

ROUTE 1 (LINCOLN BLVD) RELATED PROJECTS
San Diego Fwy. 405
Marina Fwy. 90
Sepulveda Blvd.
Manchester Blvd
Lincoln Blvd.
LAX
Jefferson Blvd.
Playa Vista
Hughes Terrace
Lincoln Blvd.
La Tijera Blvd.
Culver Blvd
Centinela Ave.
Mindanao Expressway
Marina
Fiji Way
Ballona Creek
Playa Del Rey
Vista Del Mar
Washington Blvd.
Marina Del Rey
Pacific Ocean
1 Route 1 Widening Jefferson Blvd to Fiji Way
2 Construction of a new bridge over Ballona Creek
3 Culver Blvd Overcrossing Replacement at Route 1
4 Route 1 Widening La Tijera Blvd to Hughes Terrace
5 Route 1 Mindanao (Intersection Improvements)
6 Route 1 Sepulveda (Intersection Improvements)

Figure 3

maintaining three through lanes in the southbound direction, relocating power poles, signs, signals, catch basins etc., as well as restriping, and making necessary modifications to underground utilities. All work will be within Caltrans's right-of-way.

Lastly, the following previously approved Caltrans projects in the vicinity of the Route 1 corridor are aimed at improving traffic conditions in the area as well.

Route 90 / Culver Boulevard
This project involves the replacement and modification of the signalized expressway intersection at Route 90 and Culver Boulevard. The work will also involve improvements at the signalized expressway intersections of Mindanao Way with Route 90 eastbound and westbound roadways. This project is anticipated to begin construction in mid 2001.

Route 90 / Centinela Avenue
This project involves the widening of Centinela Avenue beneath Route 90 to provide additional turn lanes on Centinela Avenue and on the westbound off-ramp. This project also involves the modification of the Route 90 eastbound on-ramp and the westbound off-ramp to increase storage. Construction is anticipated to begin in mid 2001.

Interstate 405 - High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes from Interstate 10 to Route 90
Involves improving traffic conditions in Los Angeles County on the section of the San Diego Freeway (Interstate 405) between the Santa Monica Freeway (Interstate 10) and the Marina Freeway (State Route 90), a distance of 6.4 kilometers (4.1 miles). Improvements under discussion (environmental document has been finalized) include the addition of two HOV lanes, one in each direction, addition of a full standard median, outside shoulder widening, and addition of retaining walls, soundwalls, and ramp realignments. This project is expected to begin construction in 2004.

Interstate 405 - High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes from Route 90 to Interstate 105
This project proposes an HOV lane in the shoulder area of I-405 between I-105 to SR-90. The work involves reconstructing the median shoulders in both directions and modifying lane widths to accommodate the HOV lane in the median. Minor right-of-way acquisition will be required. A triangular parcel, with an area of approximately 6,250 square feet, is required in order to relocate an existing retaining wall. Another area, approximately 7 feet wide and 1000 feet long, is required to improve sight distance. Caltrans is currently preparing an Environmental Reevaluation. Construction is expected to begin in mid-2002.

2.3.2 Playa Vista Development

This project bisects the approved Playa Vista development centered on the Route 1/Jefferson Boulevard intersection. Playa Vista is a planned mixed-use development located in the area generally bounded by Marina del Rey on the north, the Westchester bluffs on the south, Centinela Avenue on the east, and Playa del Rey on the west. Phase I of the Playa Vista development has been approved by the City of Los Angeles to include 3,246 residential dwelling

units, local-serving retail and commercial businesses, and the Playa Vista Entertainment, Media, and Technology District (the EMT District).

The EMT District will house media offices and sound stages for entertainment and technology users, and will contain approximately 280,000 square meters (Approx. 3-million square feet) of development. Master planning for Phase II of the Playa Vista development is currently in the planning stages.

2.3.3 Marina del Rey Local Coastal Plan (LCP)

The revisions to the Marina del Rey Local Coastal Plan (LCP) are intended to increase the recreational opportunities for Southern California residents. The Marina del Rey LCP consists of a Land Use Plan (LUP) and a Local Implementation Program (LIP). The LUP establishes land use policy for the Marina, while the LIP provides the needed regulations and guidelines for new development. Both components of the LCP must receive approval by the Regional Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and, ultimately, the California Coastal Commission. The Marina del Rey LUP received final certification from the Coastal Commission in 1984 and was re-certified by the Commission in 1986 after the areas south of Ballona Creek and east of Lincoln Boulevard were annexed to the City of Los Angeles. The LIP for the County-owned segment of Marina del Rey was certified with suggested modifications by the Coastal Commission on September 12, 1991; the revised LIP ordinances were approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 6, 1991, and received final Coastal Commission approval on December 13th, 1991. Implementation of the LCP will contribute to increased levels of congestion in the study area.

2.3.4 LAX Master Plan

The revisions to the LAX Master Plan are intended to allow the airport to keep pace with the anticipated growth in air travel. It seems unlikely that another major airport will be developed in Southern California in the near future, therefore it is vital to the economic vitality of the region that LAX be able to meet the anticipated air travel and air freight needs of the region. Expansion of the airport will also contribute to increased levels of traffic in the area.

2.3.5 West Bluff Development

The "West Bluff Development" is a proposed 119 residential unit development on approximately 44-acres atop the last undeveloped Ballona Bluff. On August 11, 2000, the California Coastal Commission unanimously voted to deny permits to the developer, Catellus Development Corporation, which in turn nullified the Coastal Development Permit issued by the City of Los Angeles on February 24, 1999. As a result of the Coastal Commission's action, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Judge David P. Yaffe, ruled that the challenge made against the Environmental Impact Report and Subdivision would be stayed.